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JAMES AND NANCY GRAY HARKNESS

A

COLONIAL FAMILY HISTORY

1700

TO

1850

BY

PAUL W. MICHAELS

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by
Paul W. Michaels

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IN

MEMORY OF MY MOTHER

JENNIE DECKER MICHAELS

DIRECT DESCENDANT

2016603

OF

JAMES AND NANCY GRAY HARKNESS

AND

GRANDDAUGHTER

OF

JOSEPH AND MARY HARKNESS ROSS

Period Oct 3-1978

I N T R O D U C T O R Y

ALTHOUGH THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE SMALL IN NUMBER, THEY REPRESENT MANY YEARS OF PAINSTAKING RESEARCH, COORDINATION AND COMPILING OF THE FAMILY STATISTICS. THE RECORDS HEREIN ARE AUTHENTIC, AND HAVE BEEN GATHERED FROM HUNDREDS OF SOURCES. IN MANY INSTANCES ONE DATE HAS TAKEN MANY MONTHS TO SECURE.

ALTHOUGH THE RECORD BRINGS THE FAMILY HISTORY ONLY TO THE MIDDLE OF THE 19TH CENTURY, THE STATISTICS HAVE BEEN COLLECTED BEYOND THAT DATE TO THE PRESENT GENERATION WITH THOUSANDS OF NAMES. THESE ARE STILL IN MEMORANDUM STAGES AND BECAUSE OF THE TREMENDOUS LABOR INVOLVED IN "SETTING THEM UP" CORRECTLY, IT WILL TAKE MANY YEARS TO PRESENT THEM. THUS IT WAS DECIDED TO RELEASE THIS STORY OF THE EARLY DAYS OF THE FAMILY BECAUSE OF THE INTEREST DISPLAYED BY THE DESCENDANTS.

SOME RELATIVES HAVE COMPLETED GENEALOGIES OF THEIR SPECIFIC BRANCHES, BUT NONE HAVE EVER TAKEN IN THE ENTIRE FAMILY, THEREFORE, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN ALL THE GENERATIONS, THAT IT HAS EVER BEEN COMPLETED.

ONLY THOSE WITH THE NAMES OF HARKNESS AND GRAY, WHO CAME FROM PELHAM, HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, MASS., AND SALEM, WASHINGTON COUNTY, N. Y., ARE RELATED TO THIS BRANCH. BEYOND THAT TIME, TO THE DAYS OF WORCESTER, MASS., AND PRIOR TO THAT TIME, IT CAN BE PROVEN FAMILY CONNECTION EXISTS. HOWEVER, RELATIONSHIP IS SO DISTANT, THAT IT COULD HAVE LITTLE BASIS IN FACT, BECAUSE OF THE MANY, MANY PERSONS INVOLVED IN THE FAMILY LINE.

*

The Harkness Family first came from Scotland. Later they migrated to Northern Ireland, and in the year 1718, they sailed for the Colonies, arriving at Boston, Mass. The Harkness Family remained in the area of Worcester, Mass., for a number of years prior to settling in Pelham, Hampshire County, Mass.

PELHAM

Pelham, Hampshire County, Mass., was incorporated on January 15th, 1743. Before the incorporation, Pelham was known as the New Lisburn. The "Old Cemetery" was laid out in the year 1739, thus indicating that there were inhabitants of the small settlement for some years prior thereto. A requirement that all of the settlers had to conform, was that they must have religious beliefs of the Church of Scotland, (Presbyterian), or they could not become residents of Pelham.

Pelham, Mass., is about six miles from the University town of Amherst, on top of a mountain known as Pelham Hill on Daniel Shays Highway. In 1765 there were 370 persons residing there and in 1776 the population was 728.

The Town Meeting House at Pelham was built in 1743, and the original building still stands and is in frequent use at the present time (1952). The author visited there and viewed the interior, which is still kept as it was in the early days. The benches, pews and other relics of that period are still in use. The "Old Cemetery" that was laid out in 1739 is next to the Meeting House, but because of the passing of time, the inscriptions on the stones are not visible. There are several other cemeteries in the vicinity where many early settlers are buried.

On April 7th, 1757, James Harkness married Nancy Gray at Pelham, Hampshire County, Mass. Of this union there were seven children, namely, John (called the 2nd.) born 1759-1760. Some records place his birth 1759 and also 1760. (Both records can be considered correct, as in both instances it is stated that he married Rachel McNall); William, born 1757 married Easter Bridge of Westfield, Mass. 1783, August 31, (Int.) Alexander, no statistics available; Margaret, born 1774, married Nathaniel Gray in 1791; Isabel, born August 1770, married James Bell April 10th, 1791; Jacob, no statistics available; James, born April 21st, 1776, married Mary Rhodes January 11, 1799. All of the children were born in Pelham, Mass.

It should be revealed at this point that there was another Harkness Family living in Pelham, Mass., in the same "period", namely, William Harkness, who was married to Ann Gray on June 28th, 1748, at Pelham, Mass. Seven children were born the issue of this marriage, also, and these were: John born in 1760, married to Keziah Edson; William, married Isabel Gray; David, born in 1757, who married Sarah Gray; James, born in 1759, married Elizabeth Edson; Daniel, born in 1762, married Lyda Jonathan, married to Elizabeth Thompson; Nancy, married Nathaniel Sampson.

Nancy Gray's relationship to Ann Gray was that of cousin. The statistics are as follows: John Gray, Nancy's father was born in Ireland about 1700, one of nine children; and one of his brothers was William, who was the father of Ann Gray. The Gray family came from Londonderry, Ireland. Nancy's brothers were Daniel, Capt. Isaac Gray, John, Ebenezer, Nathaniel, another

brother was believed to have been born. Nancy Gray's sister was Elizabeth. All of the Gray men were Minute Men in the Revolutionary War.

All evidence at this point of research (1953) indicates that James Harkness and William Harkness were brothers. These men married Nancy Gray and Ann Gray as recorded. The family lines from these two marriages are tremendous to date and many have distinguished themselves in numerous fields of American life through the generations.

James Harkness and William Harkness each held various town offices from the year 1756 to 1767, and then William continuously from 1773 to 1776.

For the years preceding the actual conflict between the Colonies and England, everyone in Pelham actively participated to bring about the separation from the "Mother Country". Some belonged to a Committee of Correspondence, as did James Harkness. James Harkness' first enlistment was April 19th, 1775, the day of the Lexington Alarm. He continued to be active as a "Minute Man" and served under various commanders as Private and Corporal until his discharge on August 25th, 1779, at New London, Conn., with 85 miles travel time to Belchertown. (Belchertown was next to Pelham, Mass.) James Harkness died in 1779 in Pelham, Mass., and his recorded age at that time was 57.

John (the 2nd) son of James and Nancy Harkness, was a Revolutionary soldier in his own right. His first enlistment was August 1777, and he served for a total of fourteen months, as a private. John (2nd) Harkness was pensioned on Certificate 5 661, and in 1832 he was living in Springfield, Bradford County,

Pennsylvania. John (2nd) actively participated in the Shays Rebellion (1786) which was an insurrection against the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for "unjust taxes" levied by the young State. Later all the members of the small "Army" were pardoned and signed an Oath of Allegiance to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Daniel Shays, himself, was a Captain in the Revolutionary War and a Memorial was erected to his memory a few years ago and this was placed on the grounds next to the Meeting House.

About 1790, Nancy Gray Harkness and her family moved to Salem, Washington County, N. Y., a growing settlement of Scotch-Irish inhabitants.

SALEM

Salem, Washington County, N. Y., was settled in 1761 and in later years many came from Pelham, Mass., all of Scotch-Irish descent. The Town was officially organized in 1787. It is located slightly northeast of Albany near the border of Vermont. Salem is not far from Saratoga, (Now Schuylerville) N. Y., the area of some of the most bitter fighting in the Revolutionary War.

Here in Salem, N. Y., Nancy Gray Harkness died May 7th, 1824, at the age of 85.

James Harkness, son of James and Nancy Gray Harkness married Mary Rhodes on January 11, 1799, at Pelham, Hampshire County Mass. James returned to Pelham for the marriage and then made their home at Salem. The children of this union were Jacob, born March 22, 1800, married Jerusha Hill November 29, 1829; Nancy, born December 6th, 1801, married Isaac Wright, approximately 1820; James, Jr., born June 22, 1804, died August 11, 1807;

Mary, born August 31, 1806, married Joseph Ross, "Spring" 1831; Jane, born August 22, 1808, died March 6th, 1811; James, Jr., born June 16th, 1810, married Mariah Johnson, second wife, Hannah Whitmore; Jesse, born August 2nd, 1812, married Eleanor Sarah Collins; Daniel, born May 1st, 1814, married Harriet Whitmore, July 22, 1859; McDonough born November 16, 1816, no marriage; Samuel, born November 11, 1818 married Marietta Chapman 1842, second wife, Susan Davis, October 1877. All of these children were born in Salem, Washington County, N. Y.

James Harkness, who married Mary Rhodes, formed a company of Militiamen during the War of 1812, and was appointed Captain of this Militia Company. Proof of their activity is filed with the National Archives, Washington, D. C. under the reference B. L. Wt. 94 555 120 55. Jesse Rhodes and Solomon Rhodes were also members of the Company, and are in the family line. (Note: that the spelling is sometimes Rhodes and Rhoades but they are one and the same.) At the time of the great naval battle between McDonough the American and the British under Pring, at Plattsburg, Capt. Harkness and his men were actually on Lake Champlain at the time of the engagement enroute to McDonough's forces as reinforcements, in 1814.

From Salem, N. Y., McDonough Harkness traveled with his father and mother and some of his brothers to Guilford, (Seville) Medina County, Ohio. Records have not revealed the exact date, but it is believed to have been between 1822 and 1826. Mary Harkness reached Guilford in 1829, while her sister Nancy, who had married Isaac Wright, settled there in 1830. Jacob and Jerusha

Hill Harkness arrived approximately 1830, but not later than 1832. Nothing has been found to indicate why the Harkness family moved from Pelham to Salem, to Guilford. It may have been the search for good farm land, but yet a few years later, they moved again to Walworth County, Wisconsin.

GUILFORD

Guilford Township was once part of the Conn. Western Reserve and technically No. one ----14th Range. Indians roamed the area freely. The first settler arrived there in 1811. William Bell, a son of James and Isabel Harkness Bell, settled in 1819. Mr. William Bell first visited the area in 1817. James and Isabel Harkness Bell, with their family, arrived at Guilford in 1821. Isabel Bell was a sister of James Harkness, who married Mary Rhodes, and it is certain that it was her influence that brought the Harkness family to Guilford in the succeeding years. The Bell family was very prominent in Medina County, in those years. Members of the Gray and Rhodes family settled here in the early days from Salem and Pelham.

Guilford, in the days of settlement, was virgin forest land and afforded the Indians excellent hunting. Wildlife was plentiful, including deer, bear, elk, wolves, raccoon and wildcats. Fish were to be found in abundance in nearby streams.

Guilford Township was organized in 1819. The incorporation of Seville took place in 1853. The Post Office at Guilford was changed to Seville on March 19, 1873, in Guilford Township (Seville). Mary Rhodes Harkness died April 19, 1833 and believed

to be buried in Mound Hill Cemetery. She was born in Pelham, Mass. December 12, 1777.

Although educational facilities were limited in the pioneer days of Medina County, it should be noted here that in each of the Bell, Rhodes, Gray and Harkness families, there were many who were school teachers. Thus it was that the children of those days received much of their early education.

WALWORTH COUNTY, WISC.

In the year of 1837, one year after Wisconsin became a Territory, Samuel, McDonough and Daniel Harkness, left Seville to settle in this new frontier. Wisconsin became a State in 1848. Nathaniel Bell and James Harkness, Esq., with their families, made the journey in 1837 to Walworth County. Isaac Wright and his wife, Nancy Harkness, with their family journeyed to Wisconsin. Jacob and Jerusha Harkness followed later, shortly after 1837. Mary Harkness Ross with her husband Joseph and their family remained in Seville until his death in 1876, when the family moved to Fremont, Sandusky County, Ohio. There two of the sons had already established homes. Jesse Rhodes moved to Walworth County also, but Solomon Rhodes remained in Seville, Ohio.

James Harkness, after the death of Mary Rhodes Harkness in Seville, married three times again. In each instance the wives died prior to the subsequent marriages. As far as is known, there were no children born the issue of these last three marriages. He married Dorcas Cook September 24th, 1833; married Mary Ware March 28, 1839; married Mary P. Mills November 3rd, 1852.

James Harkness, Esquire, died September 9th, 1861, at Lafayette, Walworth County, Wisconsin. His Will is on file at the County Court House at Elkhorn, Wisconsin. He is interred in Lafayette Cemetery, a short distance from Elkhorn. In addition to the Lafayette Cemetery, there is the Spring Prairie Cemetery where Isaac and Nancy Harkness Wright are buried, and some of their family. After a few years, the Wright family moved to Trempeleau County, Wisconsin.

Walworth County was organized in 1838. Lafayette was officially recognized March 21, 1843, and was formed from a section of Spring Prairie known as 3, Range 17 East. Lafayette is bordered by East Troy, Spring Prairie, Geneva, Elkhorn and Sugar Creek. Here in this area of Walworth County and nearby, are descendants of the Harkness Family (1952) and it is likely that many of this family will be living in the vicinity for generations.

For the time James Harkness married Mary Rhodes, in Pelham, Mass., their stay in Salem, N. Y. and then to Guilford (Seville), Ohio, including Walworth County, Wisconsin, at least for a number of years there, this group always moved as "one unit". There were one or two exceptions, but these followed several years later, except Mary Harkness Ross, who stayed in Seville. Few were left behind in these towns unless death had claimed them. This situation appears to have been the same for some of the Bell Family, also for the Rhodes Family, and the Grays who came to Ohio. In Walworth County, about the year 1850, the group began to "split", some to explore areas of the United States that were still Territories. (Dakotas, Minnesota, Washington, California, Oregon and Wyoming.)

It should be noted that living conditions in the days of the pioneer families of the era that is written, could hardly be called a comfortable life. On the frontiers in the early days of this country, the home consisted of a log cabin. Privacy was almost non-existent, as there was in most cases only one room. Ventilation was the chimney and on severe cold days there was no fresh air at all, in order to keep the wintry blasts from penetrating the cabin. The men, as well as women, had to forage for food, in hunting, fishing, raising crops and felling trees to clear land. Loneliness among the early pioneers was one of the most distressing situations that had to be overcome. That is one reason the Harkness family, after one group had settled, called to the others to follow; also why they remained together. Distances between settlements and the nearest cabin were tremendous. There was no telegraph, telephone or radio. Transportation was almost primitive in comparison to these days, (1953). There was some postal service, but not frequent or reliable. Thus it was in Wisconsin Territory and to some extent in Guilford. Alertness against attack by wild beasts of the forest was essential. Mary Harkness Ross has recorded (Guilford) how she shot a wild cat about to jump down the chimney, how the animal fell to the floor, clawing at the carpet in its death struggle.

The Black Hawk Indian War was fought over areas of Wisconsin a few years before the arrival of the Harkness Family, and evidence of the Indian activity was to be seen as the new settlers arrived.

James Harkness, Esquire, held numerous town offices prior to his death in 1861.

In 1837 Harriet Whitmore, the first white child, was born in Lafayette. Later, and on July 22nd, 1859, she married Daniel Harkness, (Born May 1st, 1814).

Through these years of 1837 to 1851, the younger men of the families were becoming adjusted to frontier life in a way that only can be experienced by living it. Although law and order did prevail in Wisconsin, there was the constant fear of the Indians who roamed the countryside. Many are the tales that have been told by the family of the Indians visiting the farms for food and begging for other necessities, including liquor. The winters there were always severe. The summers and autumn in sharp contrast to the freezing winter months.

After gold was discovered in California, and a short time later in Oregon Territory (1851), the news had swept the growing Nation and excited the younger men to adventurous plans. Visions of great wealth plagued the minds of McDonough Harkness, who was the first to move, also Samuel Harkness, James Wright, Edward Wright, George Wright and Langdon Porter.

Many of the historic Indian Battles had not yet been fought. Frontier history was still in the making.

Samuel Harkness, Letters of Administration to settle McDonough's Estate:

McDonough Harkness, Dec. Probate File No. 525, Box H2, File No. 5

Probate Court June 8, 1856.

TERRITORY OF OREGON }
Jackson County }

Petition of Samuel Harkness for letters of Administration of the Estate of McDonough Harkness.

To the Honorable Probate Court of Jackson County. Your petitioner represents that McDonough Harkness, a resident at the time of his death of Jackson or Josephine County, which had no officers or her own at that time, departed his life on or about the 22nd day of April, 1856, leaving property in this Territory which may be lost, destroyed or diminished in value if speedy care be not taken of the same. Your Petitioner further states that he is the brother of said deceased. He therefore prays that he may be appointed administrator of the estate of McDonough Harkness, Dec.

Samuel Harkness

Samuel Harkness being duly sworn says that McDonough Harkness left a Father, resident of Walworth County, Wisconsin. The father's name was James Harkness, four brothers, James, Jacob, Samuel and Daniel, and two sisters, Nancy and Mary. Nancy, Daniel, James and Jacob are residents of the above named county and state. Samuel a resident of Douglas County, Oregon, and Mary a resident of Metlina County, Ohio (Medina County). That the deceased died without a Will. That he will make a perfect inventory of and faithfully administer all the estate of the deceased. Pay the debts as far as the assets go and the law direct and account for and pay over all assets which shall come to his possession or knowledge.

Samuel Harkness

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 4th day of June, 1856.

A. Z. Hearn, Probate Judge

Court House, Medford, Oregon.

From the Last Will and Testament of James Harkness,
Senior, who died September 9th, 1861.

"I, James Harkness, Senior, considering the
uncertainties of this mortal life, and being of
sound mind and memory (Blessed be the Almighty God
for the same) I do make and publish this my Last
Will and Testament in manner and form the following,
that is to say,

Item -- First, I give and bequeath to my son,
Samuel Harkness, (now of Oregon Territory) One
Fifth. To my daughter Mary Ross, (of Medina County,
Ohio) One Fifth. To my daughter, Nancy Wright (of
Walworth County, Wisconsin) One Fifth. To my son
Jacob Harkness, (of Walworth County, Wisconsin)
One Tenth, and to my grandchildren, Mary Harkness,
James Harkness, William Harkness, Helen Harkness
and Menzo Harkness, the children and heirs at law
of my son Jesse, late of Walworth County, Wisconsin,
deceased, one tenth, (to be equally divided among
said grandchildren, to-wit, the one-fifth of the
said one-tenth to each) of all the estate both real
and personal of every kind and description coming
to me as father and heir of my son McDonough
Harkness, late of Fort Leland, in Oregon Territory,
deceased, and all of my interest in and to the
property and estate of my son McDonough Harkness,
deceased, and of which I may die possessed, to be
delivered and paid over to each and every one of
the above named Legatees, in the proportions as
therein mentioned."

VARIOUS NOTES AND COMMENTS BY PAUL W. MICHAELS:

Nancy Gray Harkness was also legally known as "Agnes" in Pelham, Mass. This is reflected in the Court Records on file at Northhampton, Hampshire County, Mass., under the Guardianship documents and the Will of James Harkness when it was admitted to Probate July 4, 1780. Further, the "unnamed child" as stated in the Will, when made March 2nd, 1776, is the James Harkness born April 21, 1776. These are on file in the Probate Court, Northhampton, Mass.

There is a recorded "Coat of Arms" for the Harkness Family.

Much of the family line of William and Ann Gray Harkness are in possession of the writer as well, as research has overlapped into that family, so close was the relationship and the homes of each family in the early days. Many of this family moved to Salem, Washington County, N. Y., also continuing their migrations to Ohio. In Ohio both families, James and Nancy Gray Harkness and those of William and Ann Gray Harkness, moved to towns that were within reasonable distance of each other.

It would appear that the descendants of each group migrated almost at the same time. Pelham, to Salem, Ohio, to Illinois and then a complete "spread out" throughout the west.

At this time of writing all trails indicate that the original James Harkness and William Harkness, who married Nancy Gray and Ann Gray, are brothers and a strong possibility that they may have been twin brothers.

It is expected to be proven that John and Margaret Harkness will be found to be the Father and Mother of James and William. Margaret's last name is not known at this time, but she was born 1690 and died Pelham, Mass., April 8th, 1772, aged 82 years.

Any printed material that indicates the family landed at Boston in 1710 is not correct. It is August 4, 1718.

Research has not been progressed into North Ireland by the Author, except in a most casual manner.

History has also recorded that James Harkness, (who married Nancy Gray) was a Colonial serving for a short time with the British Troops, during the French and Indian War, in 1757.

The Committee of Correspondence was composed of "Patriots" and they operated as an unofficial Government, on a "Local" basis, but were generally interlocked throughout the Colonies. Members, when the British could locate them, were jailed.

It is recorded that James Harkness (who married Nancy Gray) attended a meeting of the Committee of Correspondence on October 3, 1774 at Pelham, Mass.

PATRIOTIC ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIPS

Daughters of the American Revolution, membership authenticated through the James Harkness who married Nancy Gray:

Leona Wandschnieder (Sister of Irene Ryder) National Number 376 992

Mary E. Doehring } These ladies are National Number 405389
Doris Geils Jr. } the sisters of Paul W. Michaels compiler National Number 405390
Martha Sieber } of this Genealogy National Number 405391

Harriet C. Jenkins National Number 58921

Lola Adeline Shepard National Number 159197

Dr. Jessie C. Calvin

The following qualified through John (2nd) Harkness (son of James and Nancy Gray Harkness) who married Rachel McNall:-

Stella Emeline Turner

National Number 159880

Sons of the American Revolution:-

2016603

Roscoe Ball

Daughters of the American Revolution:-

The following qualified through the brothers of Nancy Gray:-

Emma Orton Lancaster through Nathaniel Gray

Grace Smith Ostenberg through Ebenezer Gray

There are probably others who are members of the organizations, but the above are those that have been revealed during the research.

There must be no confusion between the James Harkness who married Elizabeth Edson, as he too was a Minute Man, but was the son of William and Ann Gray Harkness.

- The record shown on this page is opportunity for future research scholars to review the Genealogical data in the publications of these Societies, as the applications filed for membership will indicate the family lines on many to 1952.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is gratefully admitted by the author that without the kind active assistance of the following persons, this Genealogy could not have been assembled:

Growth, Edith Wright
Harkness, Grove and Evelyn
Harkness, James and Maud
Lowitz, Anson
Ross, Harry
Ryder, Irene
Stull, Clara Ross
Wright, Pearl

Many others in the "family line" have contributed generously of their time to reveal facts and my sincere thanks are extended to them.

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Not included in the foregoing documentation are the various certificates, letters, diaries, Bible records, Genealogies, memorandum of all sorts that were located in family papers.

Vital statistics were found on Tombstones in Cemeteries in Pelham, Mass., Seville, Ohio, Walworth County, Wisconsin, and others, where branches of the Harkness family lived, and in some cases still have their homes.

For succeeding generations of the Harkness family and Genealogists, it will be well to remember that the original manuscript and the detailed records from which this Genealogy has been compiled, will be found in the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society at 122 East 58th Street, New York City, N. Y., where the collection has been "Willed" by the Author.

Every effort has been made to document each statement and the listings made herein can be referred to for authenticity.

